



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
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ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
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July 16, 2008

Paul J. Hibbard, Chairman
Tim Woolf, Commissioner
W. Robert Keating, Commissioner
Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities
One South Station, Second Floor
Boston, MA 02110

Dear Chairman Hibbard and Commissioners Keating and Woolf:

I am writing to request that the Department consider an immediate increase in the funding available this summer for residential energy efficiency audits and recommended energy efficiency measures administered through the ratepayer-funded efficiency programs. We must do all we can to help residents cope with what will likely be record high heating bills this winter. We are concerned that some residents will be unable to pay higher energy prices, and we fear this situation could result in an increased level of shut-offs, freeze-ups, arrearages, and potential health risks to those unable to adequately heat their homes.

Unfortunately, there is little we can do in the short term to impact record high primary energy prices, which are set by global markets. But we can and must begin immediately to help residents conserve as much energy as possible during the coming heating season. It is imperative, therefore, that residents are provided with the information and tools necessary to obtain these energy efficiency improvements as soon as possible. This includes an immediate expansion of audit programs and installation of DPU-approved efficiency measures that will result in blowing insulation into more homes, sealing cracks around more windows and doors, and replacing more outdated and energy-wasting furnaces and boilers. We are already hearing reports of backlogs for scheduling energy audits that are running into the fall. Time is now of the essence.

Fortunately the Green Communities Act, recently signed into law by Governor Patrick and developed under the leadership of Speaker Sal DiMasi and Senate President Therese Murray, gives us the ability to put a number of tools to work in the coming months and years to start solving our energy problems and get ahead of the next energy crisis. I want to work with you in the coming weeks to make sure that we take full advantage of any and all opportunities to save energy, in the hope that we will be able to deal with the current crisis and help keep as many people as possible warm and safe this winter.

In the very near term, we believe the Department should re-open dockets on currently approved utility plans for the limited purpose of taking steps to increase the availability of both energy audits and any programs or incentives that will help citizens make their homes more energy efficient this summer and fall. The Department should also notify utilities whose plans are not yet submitted or approved that such plans must include an expansion of such activities.

Now is the time to crack down on energy waste, with an aggressive energy efficiency campaign including public education about ways to save energy, expanded utility-sponsored efficiency programs, perhaps a winter heating hotline, and whatever other measures we can put in place before this winter. We dare not leave any energy saving opportunity on the table this summer and fall.

I look forward to working in close coordination with you in the coming weeks to address upcoming winter heating problems to the best of our abilities.

Respectfully,

Philip Giudice

CC: Martha Coakley, Attorney General